

**Communicable Disease Epidemiology
and Immunization Section**

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Health Advisory – 2 January, 2013: Substantial Early Influenza Activity in King County

Action requested

• **Treatment and vaccination**

- Recommend influenza vaccine in accordance with 2012-13 ACIP recommendations for all persons 6 months of age and older who do not have a medical contraindication.
- Prompt antiviral treatment is recommended for suspected or confirmed influenza in persons who:
 - Require hospitalization or have progressive, severe or complicated illness regardless of previous health or vaccination status
 - Are at higher risk for influenza complications, including:
 - Children aged <2 years; adults aged ≥65 years;
 - Persons with certain chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, renal, hepatic, hematological, metabolic or neurologic conditions;
 - Persons with immunosuppression;
 - Women who are pregnant or postpartum (within 2 weeks after delivery);
 - Persons aged <19 years who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy;
 - American Indians/Alaska Natives;
 - Persons who are morbidly obese (BMI ≥40);
 - Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities (See link below for complete recommendations from CDC).
- A negative rapid flu test is **not** an indication to withhold treatment in high risk persons with suspected influenza.

• **Reporting** - Healthcare providers and hospitals should report the following to Public Health:

- Lab-confirmed influenza deaths in persons of all ages (report within 3 business days).
- Suspected and lab-confirmed infections due to an unsubtypeable or novel (new or emerging non-seasonal) influenza virus, including avian influenza A (H5N1) virus (report immediately).
- Outbreaks of influenza-like illness or laboratory-confirmed influenza in an institutional setting, e.g., long term care facility or hospital (report within 24 hours).
- *Unexplained* critical illnesses or deaths in persons <50 years old (report immediately; influenza testing is encouraged for those with unexplained respiratory illness).

• **Testing** – Contact Public Health at 206-296-4774 to request:

- Influenza testing and subtyping on specimens from the following patients:
 - Deceased patients suspected to have influenza
 - Patients suspected to be infected with a novel influenza strain
 - Patients associated with outbreaks.
- Oseltamivir resistance testing for clinical purposes on specimens from the following patients:
 - Patients who develop laboratory-confirmed influenza while taking antiviral prophylaxis.
 - Patients in intensive care units and/or severely immunocompromised patients with prolonged excretion of influenza virus despite antiviral treatment.

Background: During week ending DEC 29th, 2012, visits to King County emergency departments (ED) for influenza-like illness increased to levels comparable to seasonal peak activity during the past five influenza seasons for all age groups. The percent of ED visits for ILI was ≥10% above the 5-year average for this time of the year among every age group, excluding the 2009-10 pandemic periods.

Resources

- Influenza vaccination, diagnosis and treatment information from CDC:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/index.htm>
- Public Health - Seattle & King County influenza information: www.kingcounty.gov/health/flu